



System Oversight Committee

2021
Annual Report

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**STATE OF MISSOURI
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

To Members of the Missouri General Assembly:

On behalf of the AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee, I present the committee's 2021 annual report.

From December 1, 2020 through November 30, 2021, Missouri issued a total of nine AMBER Alerts for 12 children (three alerts were for more than one child. All 12 children were located safe in Missouri).

Within this summary you will find the following:

- A list of AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee members;
- Technical update information regarding advancements in the Missouri AMBER Alert System;
- Information about training conducted statewide related to the AMBER Alert System;
- Relevant statistics for the period of December 1, 2020 through November 30, 2021;
- Minutes from the July 12, 2021 State Emergency Communications Committee meeting; and
- Minutes from the AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee meeting on December 15, 2021.

The AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee's greatest priorities are protecting the safety of Missouri's children and continuing to advance Missouri's AMBER Alert System. In an era of constantly changing technology, Missouri continues to advance our AMBER Alert System to make it more user-friendly to the communications personnel that utilize it and expand its reach to more Missourians through newer communications platforms, increasing the potential for safely recovering abducted children.

Sincerely,

Sandra K. Karsten
Director, Department of Public Safety
Chair, AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee

Missouri AMBER Alert Mission Statement

The mission of the AMBER Alert Program is to develop and coordinate the efforts of law enforcement, the media, and transportation in order to increase public participation in safely recovering abducted children through targeted education, increased communication, and effective sharing of resources.

AMBER Alert History

The national AMBER Alert plan was created in 1996 after nine-year-old Amber Hagerman was kidnapped and murdered while riding her bicycle in Arlington, Texas. Missouri's AMBER Alert plan was formed in 2003, following the Missouri General Assembly's passage of Senate Bill 30.

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Title 11—DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Division 30—Office of the Director
Chapter 10—Amber Alert
11 CSR 30-10.010 & 11 CSR 30-10.020

Amendment filed Aug. 20, 2020, effective March 30, 2021.

PURPOSE: This rule establishes guidelines for determining when an Amber Alert should be activated and the procedure for activating the alert.

(1) In the event of a missing child, the reporting agency shall first determine the following criteria are met:

(A) The missing child qualifies as an “abducted child,” defined as a child age seventeen (17) or under whose whereabouts is unknown and who has been determined by local law enforcement to be—

1. The victim of kidnapping as defined by section 565.110, RSMo; or
2. The victim of a crime of child kidnapping as defined by section 565.115, RSMo, the statutory age limit notwithstanding;

(B) The child is in the custody of someone other than a parent, guardian, or other official custodial entity, or sufficient evidence exists to indicate harm may come to a child from a parent, guardian, or other official custodial entity; and

(C) Sufficient descriptive information exists to enhance the possibility of recovery, such as—

1. The time and location of the incident;
2. A physical description of the abducted child or his or her clothing, if known;
3. A physical description and identity, if known, of the abductor and whether or not the abductor is armed; and
4. A vehicle description and direction of travel.

(2) The reporting agency shall take a complete report and validate the information.

(3) The reporting agency shall—

(A) Complete and submit a Missouri AMBER Alert Abduction Form through the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES). A request can also be made by completing a Missouri AMBER Alert Abduction Form on the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP) website. The form should then be emailed or faxed to the MSHP communications division; and

(B) Enter the incident into MULES and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database.

(4) Upon receipt of the Amber Alert Abduction Form, MSHP Communications Division personnel shall contact the reporting agency to confirm the validity of the alert.

(5) After receiving confirmation, MSHP Communications Division shall then disseminate the alert.

AUTHORITY: Section 210.1014, RSMo Supp. 2020.

Section 210.1014 RSMo states, “There is hereby created the ‘AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee’ whose primary duty shall be to develop criteria and procedures for the AMBER Alert system and shall be housed within the Department of Public Safety.” In 2019, HB 397, known as “Hailey’s Law,” was signed into law. Hailey’s Law requires the AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee to meet at least annually and provide an annual report.

AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee

Members:

AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee

Chair, Director Sandra K. Karsten, Missouri Department of Public Safety

Captain John J. Hotz, Missouri State Highway Patrol

Deputy Communications Director Sami Jo Freeman, Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services

Pike County Sheriff Stephen Korte, Missouri Sheriffs’ Association

St. John Police Chief Robert N. Connell, Missouri Police Chiefs Association

Program Director Todd Nixon, KBEQ-FM, Large Market Radio Broadcasters’ Representative

News Director Bridget Lovelle, KY3 and KSPR, Television Broadcasters’ Representative

Members To Be Appointed:

One representative of the Missouri Police Chiefs Association

One representative of the Missouri Sheriffs’ Association

One representative of Small Market Radio Broadcasters

AMBER Alert Criteria

There have been no changes to the AMBER Alert activation criteria. The AMBER Alert activation criteria are as follows:

- Law enforcement officials have reasonable belief that an abduction has occurred, which meets the definition in Section 565.110 or 565.115 RSMo.
- Law enforcement officials believe there is a credible threat of serious bodily injury or death to the victim.
- Enough descriptive information exists about the victim and the abductor for law enforcement to issue an AMBER Alert.
- The victim of the abduction is a child 17 years of age or younger.
- The child's name and other critical data elements — including the child abduction (CA) flag — have been entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system.

Note: Parental disputes do not apply unless a possibility of harm to the child has been determined.



Missouri State Highway Patrol Alerts Twitter page.

Technical Update

In 2021, the Missouri State Highway Patrol implemented the following enhancements to the Missouri AMBER Alert System:

- The ability to send a cancellation for a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA), thereby notifying cellular companies to cease the broadcast of an AMBER Alert when it is no longer active;
- Made the system more user-friendly for communications personnel issuing AMBER alerts;
- Technical updates required by the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) so that the Missouri AMBER Alert System continues to meet the standards for the broadcast of both WEA and EAS alerts.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol continues working to:

- Enhance future training for law enforcement;
- Further streamline the ability of law enforcement agencies to make electronic requests for the issuance of AMBER Alerts in MULES and the Regional Justice Information System (REJIS);
- Develop an enhanced public Application Program Interface (API) that will allow for the electronic sharing of active AMBER Alert information on additional media platforms such as electronic billboards;
- Expand the number of characters allowed in the transmission of a WEA text message in accordance with enhancements FEMA is making available as part of IPAWS 2.0.

Training

The Patrol's Criminal Justice Information Services Division MULES trainers include AMBER Alert training within the certification and recertification classes for users of the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System. Although the pandemic affected training, CJIS continued providing necessary training for new certifications. MULES classes for the period of December 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021 provided the following training:

MULES Full Certification Classes

393 attendees

One block of training provides an explanation of the criteria for AMBER Alerts and the process for their issuance, as well as entering missing persons into MULES. This includes Endangered Person Advisory and Endangered Silver Advisory criteria.

Recertification Classes & Terminal Agency Coordinators' Meetings

This training reviews the AMBER Alert criteria and process, technological advances, and new laws that pertain to the AMBER Alert System.

- A) Statewide MULES users — 1,351 attendees
- B) Terminal Agency Coordinators' Meeting — 260 attendees

Missouri Amber Alert Training Plan

The Missouri State Highway Patrol is developing an AMBER Alert Training Program. This new program will strengthen the AMBER Alert Program, address training needs, and improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of all AMBER Alert partners.

AMBER Alert Statistics

December 1, 2020 - November 30, 2021

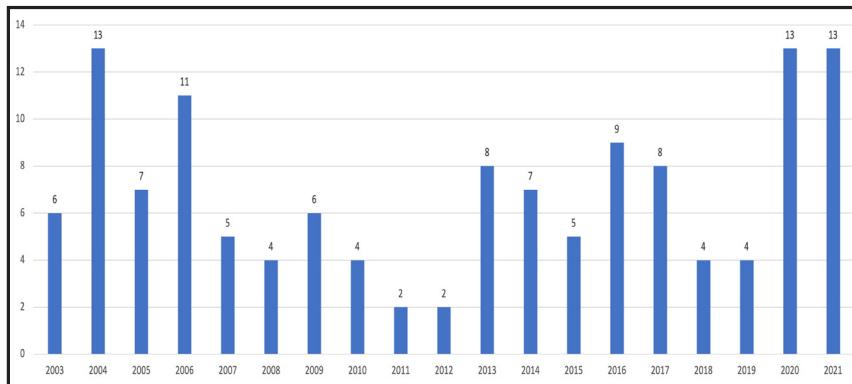
46 AMBER Alerts were requested (several included more than 1 child reported missing - a total of 57 children were reported missing)

- 13 AMBER Alerts were approved/met AMBER Alert criteria
 - 9 were broadcast:
 - 12 children were located (3 alerts involved more than 1 missing child)
 - * 12 children were located safe
 - * 0 children were located out of state
 - 4 were not broadcast as the children reported missing were located safe prior to broadcast:
 - 4 children total
 - * 3 children were located safe in Missouri
 - * 1 child was located safe out of state (Kansas)
 - 4 concluded when the children involved were found safe prior to verification that AMBER criteria was met:
 - 4 children total
 - 3 children were located safe in Missouri
 - 1 child was located safe out of state (Illinois)
 - 12 were approved for issuance as an Endangered Person Advisory (EPA):
 - 8 EPAs were broadcast:
 - 10 children total (2 alerts involved 2 children reported as missing)
 - * 3 children were located deceased
 - * 7 children were located safe
 - 5 children were located safe in Missouri
 - 2 children were located safe out of state (Kansas and Arkansas)
 - 4 EPAs were not broadcast as the children reported missing were located safe prior to broadcast:
 - 6 children total (1 alert involved 3 children reported as missing)

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- 17 AMBER Alert requests did not meet Missouri AMBER Alert criteria and no other alert was issued:
 - 21 total children (2 alerts involved 2 children reported as missing, 1 alert involved 3)

Approved Missouri AMBER Alerts 2021*



*Statistics for 2020 cover December 1, 2020 – November 30, 2021.

July 2021 SECC Meeting

Attendees:

Director Sandra K. Karsten, Missouri Department of Public Safety
President Mark Gordon, Missouri Broadcasters Association
Captain John J. Hotz, Missouri State Highway Patrol PIED
Captain Chris Jolly, Missouri State Highway Patrol CJISD
Captain Corey Schoeneberg, Missouri State Highway Patrol Troop F
Director of Radio Corey Chaney, Missouri State Highway Patrol
CJIS Assistant Director Jeffrey D. Reece, Missouri State Highway Patrol
Contract Engineer Bob Moore, Missouri Broadcasters Association
Communications Director Mike O'Connell, Department of Public Safety

The State Emergency Communication Committee met July 12, 2021.

DPS Director Sandra K. Karsten serves as chair of the SECC.

Missouri Broadcasters Association Representative Bob Moore suggested that the committee meet annually. The last SECC meeting had been on September 11, 2019. The committee reached a consensus to hold the required annual SECC meetings in July each year.

Discussion centered around the purpose of the SECC and how members are selected. Director Karsten said the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency director should be part of the committee and attend meetings going forward. She will reach out to SEMA Director James Remillard.

Missouri Broadcasters Association President Mark Gordon suggested cable operators should be represented on the committee.

Missouri State Highway Patrol Communications Division Director J. Corey Chaney will reach out to the wireless companies to invite a representative to attend the annual meeting.

The Federal Communications Commission has directed all 50 states to create a state emergency communications plan based on specific formatting and standards. Missouri's current plan was created in 2018. Bob Moore is currently working on that update. He has requested five or six state personnel be designated administrators for Missouri's state emergency communications plan.

SECC members discussed the need for a backup system to the plan. Corey Chaney and Bob Moore will research and resolve this need.

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Bob Moore spoke to the committee about the upcoming August 11 National Test of the state emergency alert system. (IPAWS will not be used.) The state's primary relay system uses LP1 stations throughout Missouri. SEMA is able to monitor this.

Director Karsten mentioned the mandated AMBER Alert Oversight Committee meeting and invited Mark Gordon to attend.

Meeting adjourned.

December 2021 Agenda

Missouri AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee

Meeting Conference Call

Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 1100 hours

The Department of Public Safety is making this meeting available only via conference call. **Dial: 1-650-479-3207 Meeting number (access code): 2463 412 3209**

Attendees:

Director Sandra K. Karsten, DPS

Captain John J. Hotz, MSHP PIED

Deputy Communications Director Sami Jo Freeman, DHSS

Sheriff Stephen Korte, Pike County Sheriff's Office

Chief Robert N. Connell, St. John Police Department

News Director Bridget Lovelle, KY3 and KSPR, Television Broadcasters

Program Director Todd Nixon, Large Market Radio Broadcasters

Captain Corey Schoeneberg, MSHP Troop F

Division Director Corey Chaney, MSHP CommD

Chief Operator James M. Parks, MSHP CommD

Assistant Director Jeffrey D. Reece, MSHP CJIS

Welcome and Introductions -- Director Karsten

Discussion of and approval of Draft AMBER Alert Annual Report -- Captain Hotz

Update 11 CSR 30-10.020 Law Enforcement Agency Procedures for Activating an AMBER Alert -- Captain Hotz

AMBER Alert statistics for 2021 -- Captain Schoeneberg

Communications Update -- Mr. Chaney

Technical Update -- Mr. Reece

Closing and Adjournment -- Director Karsten

December 2021 Minutes

Missouri AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee

December 15, 2021

Attendance:

Members:

Chair, Director Sandra K. Karsten, Missouri Department of Public Safety
Captain John J. Hotz, Missouri State Highway Patrol

Guests:

Deputy Director Kevin Bond, DPS
Communications Director Mike O'Connell, DPS
Captain Corey J. Schoeneberg, MSHP
Communications Director Corey Chaney, MSHP
Chief Operator James M. Parks, MSHP

Members Via WebEx:

St. John Police Chief Robert N. Connell, Missouri Police Chiefs Association
Deputy Communications Director Sami Jo Freeman, Missouri Department of
Health & Senior Services
News Director Bridget Lovelle, KY3 and KSPR, Television Broadcasters
Program Director Todd Nixon, KBEQ-FM, Large Market Radio Broadcasters

Guests Via WebEx:

CJIS Assistant Director Jeffrey D. Reece, MSHP

DPS Director Karsten opened the meeting and facilitated introductions. A conference room and conference call were utilized for the meeting. A roll call of AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee members was taken. Quorum declared.

Captain Hotz reviewed the updated 11 CSR 30-10.020 Law Enforcement Procedures for Activating an AMBER Alert. He noted edits to the previous state regulation which became effective March 30, 2021.

Captain Hotz presented a draft of the AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee's 2021 Annual Report.

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Director Karsten answered a question posed by News Director Lovelle regarding the AMBER Alert committee member appointment process. Director Karsten then invited News Director Lovelle and Program Director Nixon to submit names of potential board members to fill the open Small Market Radio representative opening on the AMBER Alert System Oversight Committee.

News Director Lovelle inquired if it was necessary for the AMBER Alert Committee Annual Report to include the SECC meeting minutes. Discussion revealed an overlap between the two groups that would make the inclusion of SECC meeting minutes beneficial.

Director Karsten asked for a motion to accept the 2021 annual report draft and to include minutes from the current meeting in the final report. She said the minutes would be shared via email and approved by the committee prior to inclusion.

Deputy Communications Director Freeman made the motion. Police Chief Connell seconded. News Director Lovelle suggested the other elements of the report be discussed before the motion be voted upon. The committee held the following discussion prior to the vote:

Captain Schoeneberg reviewed the statistics for the period of December 1, 2020 through November 30, 2021. (See page 11 of the AMBER Alert Oversight Committee 2021 Annual Report.)

In addition to his review, Captain Schoeneberg provided the following points of interest for 2021 to the committee:

- The longest time between a request being approved until it was issued was 55 minutes. This gap occurred because additional information was being received.
- The longest time between an alert being issued and a child being located was one day. The average time was five hours.
- The greatest distance between an abduction location and the location where a child was recovered was 30 miles.

In answer to a question by News Director Lovelle, Assistant Director Reece explained the AMBER Alert System allows messages to be sent statewide or to specific regions. The Patrol's geographic troop regions are used.

Captain Schoeneberg informed the committee that the majority of alerts were sent regionally. He did point out that one challenge is when another state requests an alert be shared, many phones getting the initial alert from that state will alert again when the Missouri alert is issued.

Communications Director Chaney indicated this is due to cell tower coverage and not geographical region overlap.

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Communications Director Chaney also informed the committee he is working with Missouri Broadcasters Association Contract Engineer Bob Moore to create a backup system for emergency alerts should the Integrated Public Warning & Alert Warning System (IPAWS), which is used for AMBER Alerts, cease functioning. They reviewed three options, two of which were prohibitively expensive. The third option includes an initial cost of \$75,000 with annual maintenance expenses estimated at \$5,000 to \$10,000. Communications Director Chaney said the Patrol is going to purchase the parts necessary for the backup system. There currently is no timeline for installation due to supply chain delays.

Assistant Director Reece reviewed the technical update included in the proposed 2021 annual report. (See page 9 of the AMBER Alert Oversight Committee 2021 Annual Report.) He expanded upon the benefits of the new ability to cancel Wireless Emergency Alerts to cellular carriers when an AMBER Alert is no longer active. He explained that previously the AMBER Alerts would sound on cellular devices if a person crossed into a region within four hours of the alert being issued, even if the alert had later been canceled. The ability to cancel WEA alerts means this is no longer occurring. He also indicated the Patrol is partnering with the Department of Public Safety on a project that would make the emergency alerts available to law enforcement groups with license plate readers and electronic message boards. These groups will be able to download all information related to the alert. Assistant Director Reece said his team is also working to expand the ability for all wireless carriers to accommodate the 360 characters allowed in a WEA.

News Director Lovelle asked if previous issues with posting AMBER Alerts to electronic billboards were related to the system itself. She also asked if there was someone from MoDOT designated to pull the information from the alert, so it appeared on the electronic message boards and if there was training for this.

Assistant Director Reece said he is open to exploring options and that, ideally, there would be a way for the AMBER Alert messages to be posted automatically when the information was received.

News Director Lovelle also inquired about the types of training available. She felt training about how the AMBER Alert system works would be beneficial to other members of the committee as well as the media.

Director Karsten responded there are two kinds of training, one is for law enforcement agencies and the other is technical.

Captain Hotz said although training has started with law enforcement and communications personnel, the goal is to expand training to media outlets. He hopes this will occur at a Missouri Press Association or Missouri Broadcasters Association conference. News Director Lovelle indicated she would assist in getting this training on the agenda for such an event.

Director Karsten said when those training dates/locations are determined the information will be shared with other AMBER Alert Oversight Committee members.

News Director Lovelle expressed concern that information about specific AMBER Alerts be shared with the public. She has fielded questions from other news outlets about the inability to get their questions answered about specific cases.

Captain Hotz answered that inquiries about the AMBER Alert process and actions taken by the Patrol should be directed to him at General Headquarters. He said questions about a specific investigation would need to be handled by the agency handling the case.

At this time, the discussion closed and Director Karsten re-addressed the motion on the floor. The motion passed.

Police Chief Connell made a motion to adjourn. News Director Lovelle seconded.

Meeting adjourned.

AMBER Alert Oversight Committee Email Meeting

On December 16, 2021, the AMBER Alert Oversight Committee met via email. A quorum was declared. Members of the committee reviewed the December 15, 2021 meeting minutes. Captain John Hotz made a motion the minutes be approved. Police Chief Robert Connell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

